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THE TALE OF TWO BAD MICE



BY
BEATRIX POTTER

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THE TALE
OF
TWO BAD MICE



THE TALE OF TWO BAD MICE

BY
BEATRIX POTTER

*Author of
"The Tale of Peter Rabbit" &c.*



LONDON
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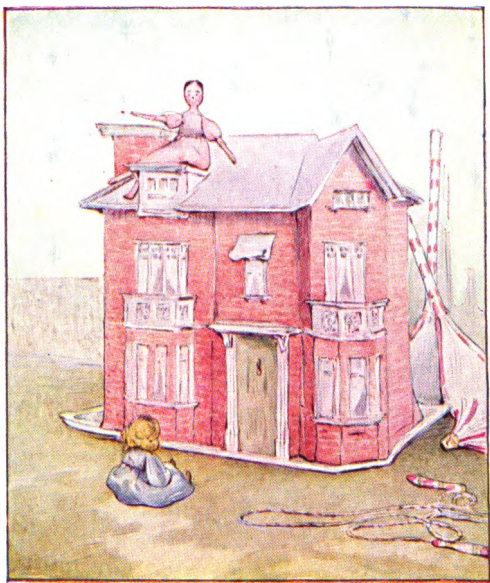
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FOR
W. M. L. W.
THE LITTLE GIRL
WHO HAD THE DOLL'S HOUSE



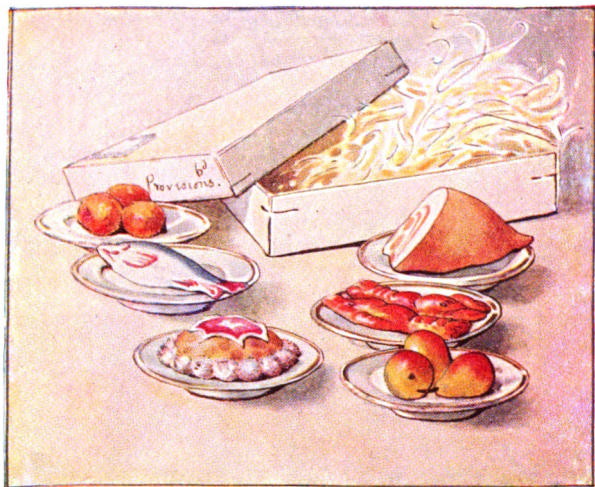
ONCE upon a time there was a very beautiful doll's-house; it was red brick with white windows, and it had real muslin curtains and a front door and a chimney.

IT belonged to two Dolls called Lucinda and Jane, at least it belonged to Lucinda, but she never ordered meals.

Jane was the Cook; but she never did any cooking, because the dinner had been bought ready-made, in a box full of shavings.







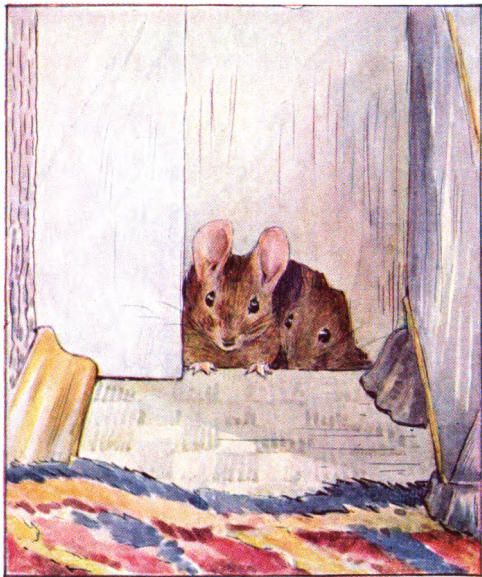
THERE were two red lobsters and a ham, a fish, a pudding, and some pears and oranges.

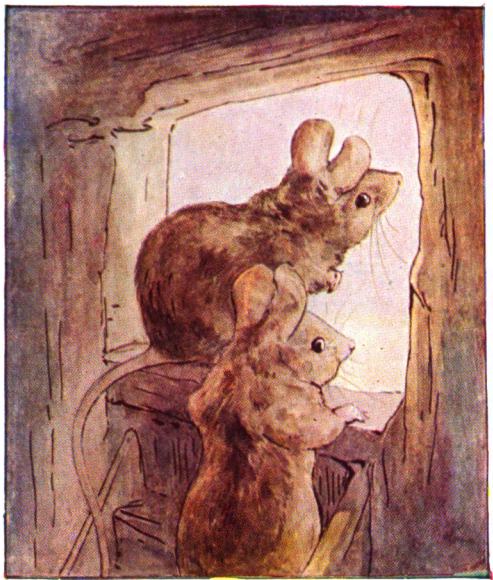
They would not come off the plates, but they were extremely beautiful.

ONE morning Lucinda and Jane had gone out for a drive in the doll's perambulator. There was no one in the nursery, and it was very quiet. Presently there was a little scuffling, scratching noise in a corner near the fireplace, where there was a hole under the skirting-board.

Tom Thumb put out his head for a moment, and then popped it in again.

Tom Thumb was a mouse.

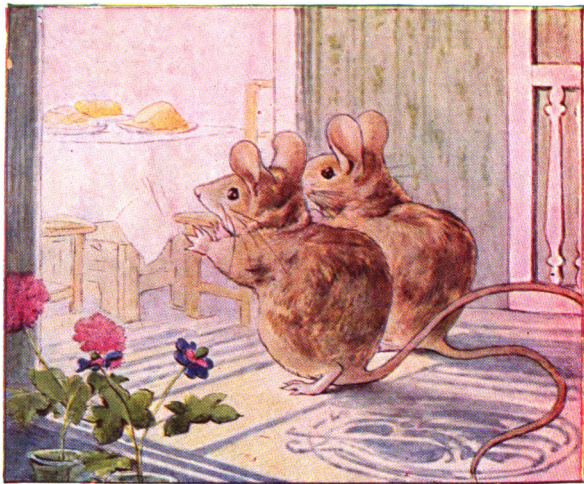




A MINUTE afterwards,
Hunca Munca, his wife,
put her head out, too; and
when she saw that there was
no one in the nursery, she
ventured out on the oilcloth
under the coalbox.

THE doll's-house stood at the other side of the fire-place. Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca went cautiously across the hearthrug. They pushed the front door—it was not fast.





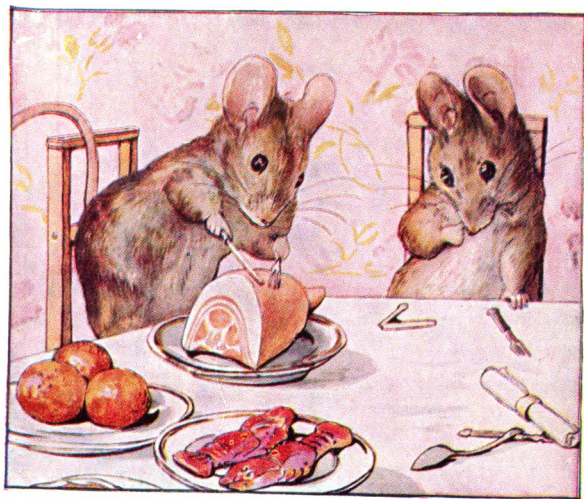
T O M T H U M B a n d
Hunca Munca went
upstairs and peeped into the
dining-room. Then they
squeaked with joy!

Such a lovely dinner was
laid out upon the table! There
were tin spoons, and lead
knives and forks, and two
dolly-chairs—all so convenient!

TOM THUMB set to work
at once to carve the ham.
It was a beautiful shiny yellow,
streaked with red.

The knife crumpled up and
hurt him; he put his finger in
his mouth.

“It is not boiled enough;
it is hard. You have a try,
Hunca Munca.”





HUNCA MUNCA stood
up in her chair, and
chopped at the ham with
another lead knife.

“It’s as hard as the hams
at the cheesemonger’s,” said
Hunca Munca.

THE ham broke off the plate with a jerk, and rolled under the table.

“Let it alone,” said Tom Thumb; “give me some fish, Hunca Munca!”





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HUNCA MUNCA tried
every tin spoon in turn;
the fish was glued to the dish.

Then Tom Thumb lost his
temper. He put the ham in
the middle of the floor, and
hit it with the tongs and with
the shovel—bang, bang, smash,
smash!

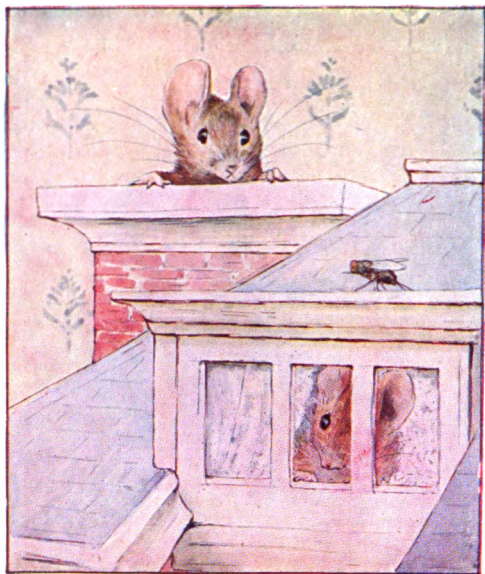
The ham flew all into pieces,
for underneath the shiny paint
it was made of nothing but
plaster!

THEN there was no end to the rage and disappointment of Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca. They broke up the pudding, the lobsters, the pears and the oranges.

As the fish would not come off the plate, they put it into the red-hot crinkly paper fire in the kitchen; but it would not burn either.





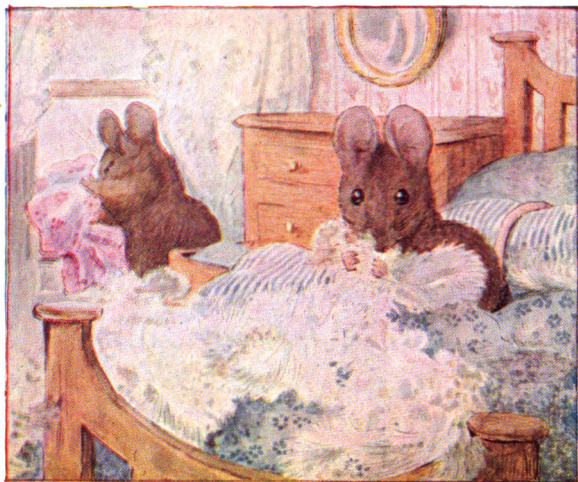


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TOM THUMB went up the
kitchen chimney and
looked out at the top—there
was no soot.

WHILE Tom Thumb
was up the chimney,
Hunca Munca had another
disappointment. She found
some tiny canisters upon the
dresser, labelled—Rice—Coffee
—Sago—but when she turned
them upside down, there was
nothing inside except red and
blue beads.





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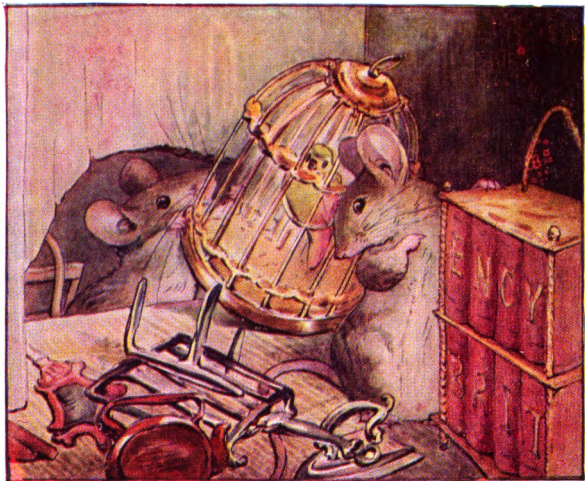
THEN those mice set to work to do all the mischief they could—especially Tom Thumb! He took Jane's clothes out of the chest of drawers in her bedroom, and he threw them out of the top floor window.

But Hunca Munca had a frugal mind. After pulling half the feathers out of Lucinda's bolster, she remembered that she herself was in want of a feather bed.

WITH Tom 'Thumb's assistance she carried the bolster downstairs, and across the hearth-rug. It was difficult to squeeze the bolster into the mouse-hole; but they managed it somehow.

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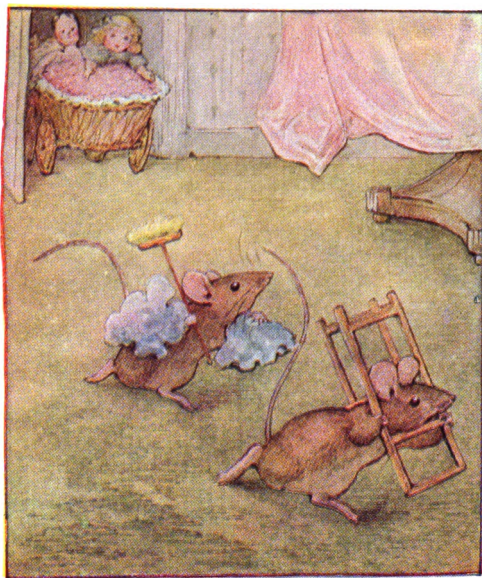
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THEN Hunca Munca went back and fetched a chair, a book-case, a bird-cage, and several small odds and ends. The book-case and the bird-cage refused to go into the mouse-hole.

HUNCA MUNCA left
them behind the coal-
box, and went to fetch a cradle.

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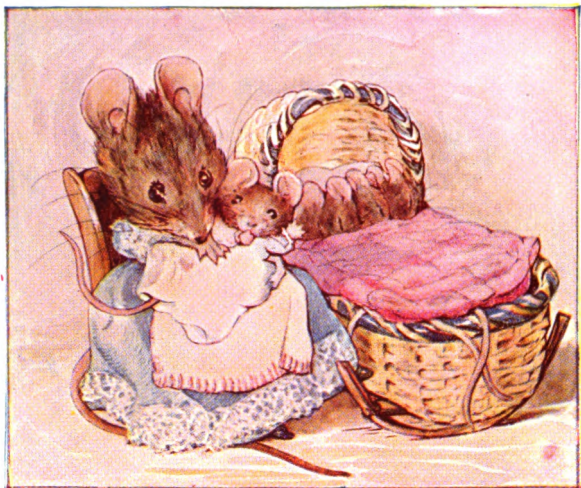
HUNCA MUNCA was just returning with another chair, when suddenly there was a noise of talking outside upon the landing. The mice rushed back to their hole, and the dolls came into the nursery.

WHAT a sight met the eyes
of Jane and Lucinda!

Lucinda sat upon the upset
kitchen stove and stared; and
Jane leant against the kitchen
dresser and smiled—but nei-
ther of them made any remark.

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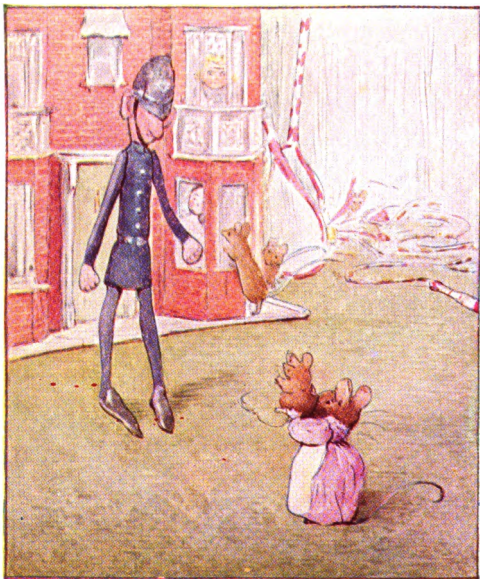


THE book-case and the
bird-cage were rescued
from under the coal-box—but
Hunca Munca has got the
cradle, and some of Lucinda's
clothes.

SHE also has some useful
pots and pans, and several
other things.

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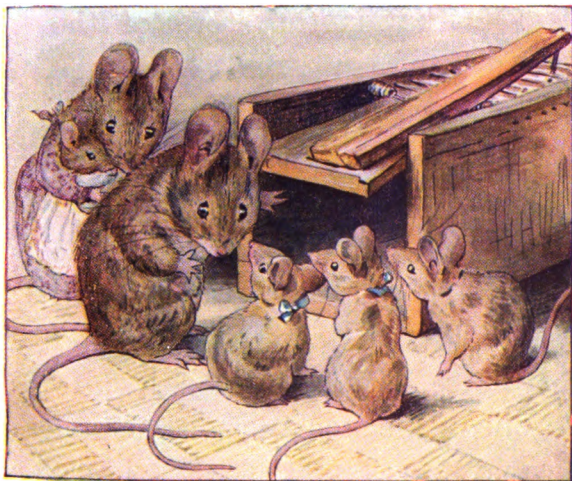




THE little girl that the
doll's-house belonged to,
said,—“I will get a doll dressed
like a policeman!”

BUT the nurse said,—“I
will set a mouse-trap!”

*nurse said,—“I
mouse-trap!”*



SO that is the story of the two Bad Mice,—but they were not so very very naughty after all, because Tom Thumb paid for everything he broke.

He found a crooked sixpence under the hearthrug; and upon Christmas Eve, he and Hunca Munca stuffed it into one of the stockings of Lucinda and Jane.

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AND very early every morning—before anybody is awake—Hunca Munca comes with her dust-pan and her broom to sweep the Dollies' house!

THE END



